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Allen Dulles: His Work Was Valuable To U.S.

Allen W. Dulles, the urbane, gregarious head of the United States Central Intelligence Agency from 1953 to 1961, labored under that inescapable occupational hazard as American spymaster-in-chief.

When his agency made a blooper, and in the nature of things it could not help but make them on occasion, chances were good that the world would hear about it, as happened in 1960 after the ill-fated flight of the U-2 over the Soviet Union, and again in 1961, when the CIA botched up the Bay of Pigs operation.

But the agency's successes — and there were many along the way, the several years of invaluable U-2 flights over the Soviet Union before 1960 being one of them — had to be kept secret.

Indeed, the success of an intelligence operation can be measured in part by the success with which it is hushed up.

Dulles, who died the other day at 75, looked the part of a spymaster, tweedy, pipe-smoking, professorial, and he played the part with patriotism, dignity and an enthusiasm which brought him the loyalty of his subordinates and should bring him the gratitude of his countrymen.